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RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 5904
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1151
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4585
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1324
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RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0199
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 0999
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0309
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [ETTC](#) [ER](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: OPENING SESSION OF EF/KHT PREPARATORY TALKS

CLASSIFIED BY: AMB Scott H. DeLisi, for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: On June 13, Ambassador attended the opening session of the Eastern Front/Government of National Unity (GNU) preparatory talks held in Asmara at the Eritrean Labor Union Hall. Both the Eastern Front and GNU were fully represented and provided positive statements on the success of negotiations and prospects for peace in eastern Sudan. The preparatory talks are expected to last 4-5 days and resolve many of the outstanding procedural issues. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) began the opening session with a positive welcome to both parties, but acknowledged the difficulties and obstacles that they will face in these negotiations. The GSE stated that as long as the parties give primacy to the interests of the people of East Sudan and the whole nation, the knots will be untangled, and peace finally dawn in the East and throughout the one-million square miles of Sudan.

¶3. (C) Mustafa Osman Ismail, former Foreign Minister, spoke on behalf of the GNU stating that the GNU was committed to finding a just and lasting peace in eastern Sudan. He continued by stating that a peaceful Sudan will help transition the entire region. He concluded that the delegation had full authority from Khartoum to negotiate with the Eastern Front and conclude an agreement.

¶4. (C) Finally Eastern Front Chairman Musa Muhammed Ahmed provided a brief overview of the history of eastern Sudan, outlined some of the underlying causes of conflict and instability and explained that any agreement reached in Asmara by the Eastern Front would be done so in consultation and with the participation of the people of eastern Sudan. He provided an explanation of the creation of the Beja Congress and Rashaida Free Lions and their evolution into the Eastern Front. He thanked the international community for their focus on the problems of eastern Sudan and called on specific countries, in particular the U.S. and others, to continue their support and engagement.

¶5. (C) Following the session, PFDJ Political Advisor

Yemane Gebreab told the Ambassador that the GSE was hopeful on the prospects for success of the negotiations. He said that he was very pleased with the composition of the GNU delegation and felt it reflected Khartoum's commitment to resolving the problems that have beset eastern Sudan. Finally, he expressed satisfaction with the broad level of Eastern Front representation and the good turn out from the international community.

16. (C) The preparatory talks are to take place in Asmara for the next 4 to 5 days. The EU and Switzerland have both sent Special Representatives on Sudan, however thus far there has been little to no engagement by the international community in the preparatory talks. The Swiss representative, who has been unable to have any substantive meetings with the parties, will leave Asmara the evening of June 14 and the EU rep, who so far has had only a very brief meeting with Ghebreab prior to the talks commencement, will leave before the end of the week. However they, and other international observers, are expected to return for the formal negotiations which will likely begin within a month of the conclusion of the preparatory sessions. Copies of the GSE opening statement and Eastern Front speech have been sent to AF/SPG and AF/E.

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